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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the need for multicultural perspectives in teacher preparation programs and ways in which teacher education institutions can enhance multicultural education. Standards and criteria of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) with regard to multicultural education and the response of Northern Michigan University's (NMU) teacher education program to these standards are outlined. The teacher education program at NMU incorporates multicultural or global perspectives throughout the professional studies component of the teacher education program. The university engages in ongoing efforts to recruit, support, and retain students and faculty from among the Native American, African American, and Hispanic populations of the state. Attention is also given to arranging field placements in culturally diverse settings. Several recommendations featuring specific strategies are made for enhancing multicultural teacher education. The recommendations focus on four areas: a multicultural knowledge base as the centerpiece for the teacher education curriculum, field experiences, student recruitment and retention, and faculty teaching strategies. (IAH)

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ENHANCING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

by

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Abstract

This paper examines the importance of multicultural education and offers recommendations to improve the teacher education knowledge base and field experiences for multicultural education in teacher preparation programs. The paper reviews the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards related to multicultural education and Northern Michigan University's teacher education program's response to these NCATE standards.

Recent national reform, research and demographic reports have firmly established the importance of enhancing multicultural education in teacher preparation programs. This is a relatively new challenge for teacher educators, who historically prepared their students to operate within the dominant culture. A change began in the seventies with the growing sensitivity of educators to cultural diversity; the recent introduction of National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards requiring multicultural perspectives in teacher preparation programs accelerated this change.

A recent survey of critical issues in teacher education (Buttery, Haberman, and Huston, 1990) asked respondents to rank five items they believed were the most critical. They ranked third the preparation of teachers for multiethnic and multicultural settings. The respondents, 944 Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) members, generally did not believe current teacher education programs accomplish this and that these programs need to do more.

> The respondents seem sensitive to the need for teacher education to occur in multicultural settings. They do not believe this is being done within the structure of present programs. Since there are extremely few minority university faculty (outside of the traditionally black institutions) and since most teacher-preparing institutions are in small towns, rural areas or in small cities, it is problematic that the students currently prepared in these universities are, indeed, being prepared in the multicultural settings perceived necessary by the respondents. One explanation for this response might relate to the definition of multicultural. Some teacher education institutions may perceive that their students are in a multicultural setting if there are one or two minority children/youth in a cooperating school; others would not consider a cooperating school multicultural without at least a substantial number of diverse students representing multiple cultures with at least some minority classroom teachers. Clearly the respondents believe more significant effort needs to be made in addressing the issues of multicultural education. (p. 5-6)

Traditionally teacher preparation has focused on content (such as math and science) and the art of teaching. Debate continues as to which of these is the most important knowledge base for teachers, although the major goal of both schools of thought has been to prepare teachers with a broad knowledge of pedagogy and content who will be effective teachers. Many instructional models are available; the teacher's choice as to which one to use affects student performance and success in the classroom. Content and pedagogy alone will not suffice, however, teachers must also possess a multicultural perspective. This paper addresses the need for multicultural perspectives in teacher preparation programs and the ways teacher preparation institutions can enhance multicultural education.

NCATE Multicultural Education Standards

Recognizing the changing nature of U. S. education, NCATE has reorganized the accreditation process for institutions involved in preparing professional educators. NCATE now reviews institutional accreditation every five years and monitors an annual report of information and data that relates to the five broad standards for which it seeks compliance.

Four of the five standards outlined in NCATE's *Standards, Procedures and Policies for the Accreditation of Professional Education Units* (1987) contain specific compliance criteria, with multicultural or global perspectives on the institution's Professional Education Unit which NCATE will evaluate.

NCATE defines a multicultural perspective as "a recognition of (1) the social, political, and economic realities that individuals experience in culturally diverse and complex human encounters and (2) the importance of culture, race, sex and gender, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, and exceptionalities in the education process" (NCATE, 1987, p. 57).

Criteria 23 states "the curriculum for professional studies component(s) incorporates multicultural and global perspectives." Criteria 27 says that "education students participate in field-based and/or clinical experiences with culturally diverse and exceptional populations." Criteria 40 encourages the recruitment of quality candidates who come from diverse economic, racial, and cultural backgrounds, and criteria 53 states that the composition of the faculty represents cultural diversity (NCATE, 1988).

Northern Michigan University's Teacher Education Program

Using NCATE's definition and standards, Northern Michigan University (NMU) has examined its compliance with the multicultural perspectives. NCATE's standards and criteria for compliance appear below, followed by an explanation of how Northern Michigan University's present program meets each criteria.

Content of the Curriculum

NCATE specifies in Category 1, Knowledge Bases for Professional Education, that the unit should provide for study and experiences to help education students understand and apply appropriate strategies for individual learning needs, especially for culturally diverse and exceptional populations.

Standard I.E: Content of the Curriculum--Professional Studies states, "The unit ensures that the professional studies component(s) prepares education students to work effectively in their specific education roles" (p. 39).

Criteria for compliance number 23 states, "The curriculum for professional studies component(s) incorporates multicultural and global perspectives" (p. 40).

NMU does not limit its multicultural and global perspectives to one course in the professional studies component. According to a survey of the professors

teaching NMU's professional education sequence, its education program embeds these perspectives in the curriculum and addresses them throughout the program. As an example, students in foundations courses address multicultural perspectives in relation to schools as institutions. Two major purposes are to extend awareness of the complex forces that shape the structure and policies of schooling in a pluralistic society and to promote understanding of the responsibilities, freedom, risks and constraints that accompany effective teaching in the context of American pluralism. NMU accomplishes this by presenting the historical, philosophical, and legal dimensions of American education.

Multicultural and global perspectives continue to provide major and minor themes of various methods courses and tie closely to the clinical and field-based experiences. In a survey of all professional education courses taught at NMU, all but two included multicultural and global perspectives as either a major or minor focus. For example, Children's Literature in the elementary curriculum emphasizes the diversity available through literature and the integration of this literature into other content areas, such as social studies.

Relationship to the World of Practice

In Category II, Relationship to the World of Practice, NCATE specifies in Standard II.A: Clinical and Field-Based Experiences, "The unit makes certain that clinical and field-based experiences in the professional education curriculum are designed to prepare students to work effectively in specific education roles" (p. 41).

Criteria for compliance number 27 under this standard states "Education students participate in field-based and/or clinical experiences with culturally diverse and exceptional populations" (p. 41).

The Upper Peninsula of Michigan, where NMU is located, is a rural area with an interesting ethnic history. The Upper Peninsula has no urban centers, a widely dispersed population, limited industry, high poverty and unemployment levels. The cultural and economic diversity of the area provides NMU students with a rich exposure to teachers and students of several distinct ethnic and social economic groups. The region has nearly 10,000 (3 percent) Native Americans. Other ethnic groups with a significant influence include Finns and other European immigrants-many of whom are first or second generation Americans who retain their ethnic identity. NMU makes its early field-based placements predominately near Marquette, where the area places limitations on the degree of diversity.

African American and Hispanic students are few and not readily visible in most schools. However, the university can make student teaching assignments in locations that have more cultural diversity. Green Bay, Wisconsin, an urban area over 150 miles from NMU, is used for student teaching placement and the cultural diversity there is representative of any large urban area. The nearby Gwinn School system draws the majority of its students from K.I. Sawyer Air

Base, which has an African American population. Escanaba, Baraga, Brimley, L'Anse and Sault Ste. Marie have substantial Native American populations and are used for student teaching placements, even though some of them are over one hundred miles from the NMU campus.

Admissions

Category III, Students, includes the following statement regarding Admissions: "The unit's admission procedures encourage the recruitment of quality candidates and those quality candidates represent a culturally diverse population" (p. 44). Criteria for compliance 40 reads "Applicants from diverse economic, racial, and cultural backgrounds are recruited" (p. 44).

The University mainly serves students from Michigan's Upper Peninsula and around the state. Seventy percent of the approximately 8700 students at NMU come from the predominantly Caucasian population of the Upper Peninsula. African Americans and Native Americans each comprise approximately two percent of the student body. Hispanics and Asian Americans account for one percent of the students. NMU does have a higher percentage of full-time students who are Native American than any other Michigan college or university.

NMU Admissions and Financial Aids staff recruits students from diverse economic, racial, and cultural backgrounds through a wide variety of recruitment strategies. These strategies include mail recruitment campaigns, high school visits and open houses throughout the state of Michigan and target areas outside of Michigan, financial aid information sessions in high schools in the Upper Peninsula, and college nights throughout Michigan. In order to reach and communicate with prospective students in lower Michigan more effectively, three of the admissions staff members work in regions of lower Michigan that have large African American and Hispanic populations.

A campus visit program offers free room and board for prospective students and their families as a strategy to attract students. The program is designed to attract applicants from outside the Upper Peninsula.

The staff of the Multicultural Affairs Office makes special efforts to identify and attract students from diverse economic, racial and cultural backgrounds. Counselors visit high schools, community colleges, churches, and Indian reservations in the Upper Peninsula, lower Michigan, and several out-of-state cities to recruit diverse students to Northern Michigan University and the Teacher Education Program.

This spring the Multicultural Affairs office and the Department of Education will co-sponsor an on campus visitation for Native American students from the Upper Peninsula. High school juniors and seniors will stay on campus overnight, meet with Department of Education faculty members and Native American students enrolled in the Teacher Education Program. They will also attend education class sessions.

In spite of the above efforts to recruit a diverse student population, the racial diversity of the University and Teacher Education Program remains limited.

Faculty

Standard IV.A: Faculty Qualifications and Assignments states "The unit ensures that faculty in professional education are qualified to perform their assignments and also reflect cultural diversity" (p. 47). Criteria for compliance 53 reads "The composition of the faculty represents cultural diversity" (p. 47).

The NMU teacher education faculty represent cultural diversities in religion, socio-economic status, regionalism, urban and rural, sex, ethnicity, and age. The majority of the teacher education faculty appointed since 1984 possess significant professional experience with cultural diversity.

Racial diversity, however, is inadequately represented in the Education Unit, as is the case within the larger University community. In order to address the situation to some extent, the University participates in Michigan's King/Chavez/Parks visiting professor program which brings Native American, African American and Hispanic professors to campus on a limited basis. Over the past three years, departments within the education unit have hosted these visiting faculty, particularly in summer sessions. In addition, extensive recruiting from a very limited pool of qualified minority candidates continues with each faculty opening.

Multicultural education is an ongoing topic of discussion in faculty meetings and its infusion into the program is considered by the various committees in the Professional Education Unit. It was a major topic of a day long retreat of the Department of Education in the fall of 1991 and is a major item in the strategic plan of the university. Through these activities, the faculty and others develop their cultural awareness and sensitivity.

Recommendations for Enhancing Multicultural Teacher Education

Goodlad (1990), in *Teachers for the Nation's Schools*, puts forth nineteen postulates necessary for effective teacher education, including some that relate to the multicultural agenda. His postulate six says that candidates should have a commitment to the moral, ethical, and enculturating responsibilities of teaching. Postulate nine states that self-oriented student preoccupations must become more other-oriented. Postulate twelve discusses the need to be able to address the issues and dilemmas that result in the tensions between the rights of individuals and special interest groups and the role of schools in transcending parochialism. The thirteenth postulate states

> "Programs for the education of educators must be infused with understanding of and commitment to the moral obligation of teachers to ensure equitable access to and engagement in the best possible K-12 education for *all* children and youths." (p. 60)

Currently teachers are not very well prepared for engendering multicultural perspectives in their students. The teacher education institutions

will have to change to be able to help teachers meet this important need. This represents one of the greatest challenges facing our schools of education. If educational institutions are to accomplish this transformation, they must undergo a serious restructuring and renewal of their missions and programs. If teachers of the future are to guide us in this process, they must clearly understand the moral and ethical requirements of a multicultural and global society, the art and science of pedagogy, as well as their specialty areas..

We know much about diverse cultures, but our schools of education teach little to help teachers understand these cultures. When students from diverse cultures enter school, they face not only new academic tasks, but also the school's culture and must master both. Teachers must have a knowledge base that will assist these students in successfully overcoming both barriers.

Schools and colleges of education must provide leadership for this transformation. It will require changing they teach, how they teach it, and how much they teach it. A change in the ways of seeing, thinking, feeling, and doing by both teacher educators and the students who are preparing to be teachers of the future is necessary if meaningful and lasting change is to occur.

Knowledge Base

The following are some suggestions for embedding a multicultural perspective in the teacher education curriculum. No new courses in multicultural education are needed, rather the schools of education need to build awareness into existing courses. Teaching multiculturalism outside of content or pedagogy will continue to isolate the differences and place a possible negative value on them. Only by incorporating them in existing coursework can we give them positive value.

Liberal studies and pre-methods courses should begin to form a multicultural knowledge base.

- All liberal studies and pre-methods courses should be taught from a multicultural perspective and engender sensitivity.
- Courses with a multicultural focus in the liberal studies component should be identified and required of all education students.
- Foundations of education and human growth and development courses need to emphasize how differences in cultures and values can affect student learning. Students must be taught how to recognize these differences, acknowledge the differences and value them.
- Specific contributions in the history of diverse cultures in education and thought need to be identified.

Establishing a multicultural perspective will require teachers to eliminate their prejudices towards other peoples irrespective of their culture, nationality, race, class, or other differences. The multicultural knowledge base can be directly addressed at the university in the arts, foreign languages, anthropology, sociology,

psychology, physiology, and other human sciences, but the entire curriculum needs to reflect a cultural sensitivity.

Methods courses should add to the multicultural knowledge base, present the latest research and explain how to

- recognize and adapt to different learning styles.
- promote active learning.
- implement teaching models appropriate for all groups.
- use supplementary materials and activities to make classrooms more multicultural.
- continually analyze the strengths and weaknesses of one's own teaching.

NCATE has established an elementary education task force which has developed guidelines for basic elementary education programs (September, 1989). These guidelines also address multicultural perspectives. Among the guidelines are statements concerning the teacher candidates understanding and ability to deal with students of different cultural and language backgrounds. They state that

> Prospective teachers should understand the development of appropriate curriculum and instructional strategies for meeting the needs of students with diverse characteristics.
> Elementary school teachers must honor the dignity and rights of every individual learner consonant with a nature of our democratic and pluralistic society. Thus, programs should be developed from a multicultural perspective" (NCATE'S Elementary Education Task Force, 1989, p. 236).

These guidelines for basic programs in elementary education state that students should study and apply current research about teaching and learning in culturally and linguistically diverse populations, have clinical and field experiences with students of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and have experiences "in identifying stereotypes (e.g., cultural, gender, age, etc.) in curriculum materials and adapting instruction appropriately" (p. 245).

Field Experiences

Teacher training institutions should use field experiences to enhance the multicultural perspective and apply the knowledge from liberal studies, pre-methods and methods course.

- They should identify sites where education students can work in a positive multicultural setting with culturally diverse students, staff and faculty.

- They should make sure appropriate teaching strategies are modeled at these sites by master teachers and education school faculty.
- They should require reflective journals of classroom observations and interactions to be kept to help develop useful strategies and practices.
- They should require mentoring of culturally diverse students combined with seminars to develop cultural sensitivity in teacher education students.

Teacher training should reflect the diversity of society, as well as help our students learn to appreciate and use that diversity to everyone's mutual benefit. Teacher training must find a human ecology which unifies the genders, classes, nationalities, religions, and other features that characterize humanity in a way that is mutually enriching to all.

Preparation and indoctrination of teacher education students into teaching must be such that they will not lose the idealism, commitment and good practices, that are necessary to restructure and make improvements. Too often, teachers receive new ideas and more progressive methods of education, only to have them socialized into the established schools systems, adopting the behaviors and standards of that institution. Universities must undertake efforts to select and use clinical sites to help students develop and maintain new perspectives and practices so they will be in a position to improve perspectives in K-12 education. The reform of teacher education must link with that of K-12 education. This will require a great deal of effort to bring about the restructuring of both institutions simultaneously , but it is vital important that they work together if education is to progress.

Students

The problems of attracting and retaining a diverse student population have been discussed at length in the literature and are major concerns of universities and teacher education programs. Attracting students from diverse elements of our society is a challenge second only to retaining them once they have enrolled. The failure of the university community to accept and support diverse student needs on campus is the primary reason students leave. Some ways to improve the number of under-represented students are given below.

- Implement a focused recruitment plan to attract racially and culturally under-represented students to the teacher education program.
- Increase retention by aligning curriculum to meet the needs of a diverse student population.
- Develop a support or mentoring system for diverse students.
- Foster an atmosphere throughout the university that values and supports diversity.
- Integrate culturally diverse students into all aspects of the university.

The University community will need to change the way it sees, feels about and behaves toward students of different cultural backgrounds if these ideas are to be effective. These changes are discussed elsewhere in this paper.

Faculty

Education faculty should model the strategies they teach, especially strategies for multicultural classes and adapting teaching to learning styles. Faculty members must also enhance their own professional development by learning to address bias in their own classroom.

Most professors of education had little exposure to issues of multicultural education in their training. In-service sessions, colloquia, summer institutes, or seminars could include

- strategies described above for the undergraduate program.
- identification of culture-biased attitudes and behavior in themselves
- educational methods and strategies that work to combat such bias.

Teachers need to build on the entry level characteristics of students and validate their cultural identity in order to give them the best chance for success. Teachers must first recognize cultural differences; secondly, they must acknowledge those differences and then value those differences. For example, in the area of reading and language, activities for Native American students should emphasize Native American cultural experiences. Much of the material must be contemporary because students will relate best to experiences in the present rather than in the past. Experiences that are part of their schema or immediate past experience can be more easily built upon (Gilliland, 1983).

Teachers need to recognize how both cultural differences and learning styles affect on a child's ability to learn and use language. Research confirms that approaches to language learning which incorporate opportunities to use all learning modalities in cooperative contexts are optimal for all children. These strategies are particularly appropriate for Native American children who learn best by using their senses in environments where cooperation is emphasized (Hirst & Slavik, 1989)

Understanding the student's "home culture" is vital for understanding basic aspects of their behavior both in and out of the classroom, including language related behaviors. Any group has philosophical values which are cherished beliefs that are not questioned but taken as absolutes for governing behavior. Different cultures have varying standards of what is and is not acceptable or respectful behavior. Silence, talking, touching, smiling, eye contact, and competition are but a few. Teachers need to recognize these differences in values and standards, accept them as assets and value them.

Finally, when new faculty are hired, a special effort should be made to make certain they possess a multicultural perspective.

In order to reform schools, teacher educators must concentrate not only on teacher training but on teacher in-service. Basic changes must be made in teacher education programs and in school districts if all groups are to succeed. A new educational paradigm is necessary which will focus on differences as assets and not deficits.

Conclusion

The debate about multicultural perspectives has attracted national attention, both within and without teacher training institutions, and has engendered some heated debate. Whether we like it or not, we are a multicultural nation and have to confront the needs of our time.

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) specifies in the knowledge bases for professional education that the unit should provide for study and experiences to help education students understand and apply appropriate strategies for individual learning needs, especially for culturally diverse in exceptional populations (1987). NCATE also states in Item 23 of the knowledge base standards that the "curriculum for professional studies component(s) incorporates multicultural and global perspectives" (p. 40). In Category II, The Relationship to the World of Practice, they indicate that education students should participate in culturally diverse field settings. NCATE's Category III standards, Students, state that applicants should be recruited from diverse backgrounds with participation of under represented groups encouraged. Category IV requirements indicate that the faculty should represent cultural diversity.

The solutions the world requires must go beyond the pragmatic and superficial ideas that are current amongst leaders of thought and politicians, to the deep abiding principles upon which human values are based and human institutions are directed. Teachers that are now being trained in colleges of education are going to play a key role in aiding humanity to develop these principles. Unless these teachers are given an appreciation of the diversity of human values and expressions, then they will be unable to impart these attitudes.

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